

WISCIENCE COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING FRAMEWORK

FRAMEWORK COMPONENT: IDENTITY

OVERVIEW

This is part of a series of example activities based upon components from the Wiscience community-based learning (CBL) framework and how they are used in Wiscience courses for different groups of students: first-year undergraduate students, undergraduate students of any level, and graduate students. Prompts and summaries of student responses are included for each.

TOPIC: DEVELOP AWARENESS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

Broad Goals

- Recognize the the importance of understanding your own identity prior to entering a community space.
- Realize that different communities and/or community organizations have different identities that frame their goals and beliefs.
- Reflect upon whether identity/identities are static or evolve over time.
- Connect personal identity to STEM identity.
- Design activities such that students are encouraged to engage with the concept of identity more deeply as they move through the undergraduate and graduate experiences.

In the context of the CBL framework, these activities fall into the “**Personal Growth and Leadership**” domain and the “**Develop Awareness of Personal Identity**” student outcome; highlighted in green on the CBL framework on the following page.

The courses described in this activity resource are:

- Exploring Service in STEM (First-Year undergraduate students)
- Service with Youth in STEM (Open to all undergraduate students; primarily juniors and seniors)
- Public Service in STEM (Graduate students and post-doctoral fellows)

Very few students participate in both of the undergraduate offerings, and none of the undergraduates transition into the graduate-level course. As might be expected, the graduate-level course includes much more in-depth personal reflection and analysis.

WISCIENCE Community-Based Learning Framework A resource for instructors and students in community-based learning courses						
Learning Domains ¹	ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DOMAIN	CIVIC DOMAIN	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DOMAIN	DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL DOMAIN	PERSONAL GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP DOMAIN	SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION DOMAIN
Student Outcomes²	Learn disciplinary concepts through integration of course and community settings	Understand pathways to participation in public life	Engage with community members	Develop knowledge of diverse human experiences	Develop leadership skills	Develop active listening skills
	Demonstrate understanding of disciplinary concepts in an applied setting	Develop the skills to participate in civic life	Develop independence in community-engaged work	Interact effectively across differences	Develop ability to accurately self-assess knowledge and skills	Develop interpersonal communication skills
	Consider the public purpose of scholarship	Develop and integrate civic identity	Develop the ability to learn through critical reflection	Develop a systems view of power, privilege, and bias	Develop awareness of personal identity	Develop teamwork and collaboration skills
	Develop experience and skills relevant to career development	Develop civic agency and self-efficacy	Understand and adapt to the culture and context of community environments	Develop skills to approach work with cultural humility	Develop resilience	Develop and maintain authentic relationships
	Articulate the value and challenges of translating theory into practice	Develop knowledge of contemporary societal issues	Understand how large social forces are localized in the community	Recognize and honor individual lived experience and contributions of others	Act in an ethical and socially responsible manner	Engage controversial social issues with civility
			Value community engagement and collective action to affect social change		Develop a values framework through which societal and institutional structures can be interrogated	

This framework is used to guide community engaged programming at WISCIENCE, is available for other educators to use, and is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#). It was developed by Jessica TeSlaa (WISCIENCE) and Mo Bischof (Office of Assessment), and adapted by Anna Courtier (WISCIENCE). It was funded by an Undergraduate Science Education grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to the University of Wisconsin–Madison (#52006959) and by the Wisconsin Institute for Science Education and Community Engagement (WISCIENCE).

¹ **Learning domains** – Broad categories encompassing multiple student outcomes, which have been generated both through participatory workshops with CBL instructors and by consulting the literature.

² **Student outcomes** – Areas of focus which an instructor might use to guide development of clear and measurable learning outcomes or objectives. As written in the framework, they are generally too broad to be considered specific learning outcomes themselves.

EXPLORING SERVICE IN STEM

FRAMEWORK COMPONENT: DEVELOP AWARENESS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

OVERVIEW: DEVELOP AWARENESS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

A primary goal for discussing identity with **first-year undergraduates** is to realize there are many facets that contribute to social and personal identities that they may not have considered in the past, and to recognize that not all identities are static.

Students are provided with personal and social identity wheels, adapted from a resource developed at Arizona State University:



PRE-CLASS PROMPT

As part of their pre-class preparation, students are asked to fill out the identity wheel, with the caveat that they can complete as much or as little as feels comfortable. Then they are asked to and reflect and briefly respond to the following questions:

- In what ways does your identity orient you towards effective interaction/communication with others?
- What strengths do you bring to situations where you will be engaging and/or collaborating with others?

IN-CLASS ACTIVITY

Following on their pre-class reflection, students are prompted to identify 2-3 aspects of the identity wheel that they felt connected to them and were willing to share. Students are given the option to pass and participate as listeners if they feel that is the most comfortable option for them. In small groups, they are asked to share their chosen identities and discuss:

- If this *had* changed over time
- If this *could* change over time
- Whether this is a static part of their identity.

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

Student responses for the pre-class prompt were generally broad, emphasizing their strengths in collaboration without incorporating specific aspects of their identity that support those strengths. Many described characteristics like having good listening skills, being adaptive, open-minded, or patient.

"A big part of my identity is me trying my very best to be open minded in every and all situations." – KH

"I feel like I am a respectful and non-judgmental person and these would some strengths when collaborating with others. -DC

Students who did incorporate specific identities in describing their collaborative strengths tended to mention identities based on race or ethnicity, socio-economic status, or being first-generation college students. Some described barriers they faced as motivation for understanding the perspectives of others.

"[I am] in tune with my cultural background. Consequently, I am open to the cultural backgrounds of others." – AT

"I know about struggle, and so I sympathize and respect others always because I believe that everyone has a history and faces their own challenges and to efficiently collaborate." – ST

During the in-class activity, most students chose to discuss elements of the personal identity wheel rather than the social components. Many students acknowledged that they perceived their identities had not changed much before college, but that they anticipated components could or would change as they developed more lived experiences through college and beyond.

Note: These sample responses are from one course offering. They are representative of student responses, but they have not been formally evaluated and do not include responses from multiple groups of students. In this case, n=16 students.

SERVICE WITH YOUTH IN STEM

FRAMEWORK COMPONENT: DEVELOP AWARENESS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

OVERVIEW: DEVELOP AWARENESS OF PERSONAL AND STEM IDENTITIES

A primary goal for discussing identity with **undergraduate students of any age** (primarily juniors and seniors) is to realize there are many more facets that contribute to social and personal identities than they may realize, to emphasize that many identities change over time, and to make connections between their personal identities and STEM. For this class in particular, **university students lead elementary after-school science clubs**, and the incorporation of STEM identities is an important aspect of the course.

PRE-CLASS PROMPT

As part of their pre-class preparation, students are asked to think about identity in the context of STEM and reflect and briefly respond to the following question:

- Describe the time you first felt like a scientist. If you don't feel that yet, what do you think would be a key contributor to help you feel like one? (You can draw from the readings and/or your personal experiences).

ASSOCIATED READINGS

- Hodder, J., *SAGE Musings: Developing Students' Science Identity*, University of Oregon, 2017.
- Kaun, N., *An Unexpected Journey*, The Moth podcast. Original Air Date: May 11, 2021.
- Kirk, K. Self-Efficacy: *Helping Students Believe in Themselves*, SERC Resource.
- Martin-Hansen, L., *Examining ways to meaningfully support students in STEM*, International Journal of STEM Education, 2018.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITY

Students are told that class will begin by taking a step back from STEM identity to think about identity more broadly. They are provided with personal and social identity wheels, adapted from a resource developed at Arizona State University:



Students are then given time in class to look over the identity wheels and choose two examples that relate closely to their lives and have changed over time. They're encouraged to choose at least one from the social identity wheel, if they are comfortable. One or both of their choices should be something they are comfortable sharing with the class. Students are given time to reflect on their choices, in whatever form they choose: quiet thought, bulleted lists, free-write paragraphs, etc. This usually takes about 10 minutes.

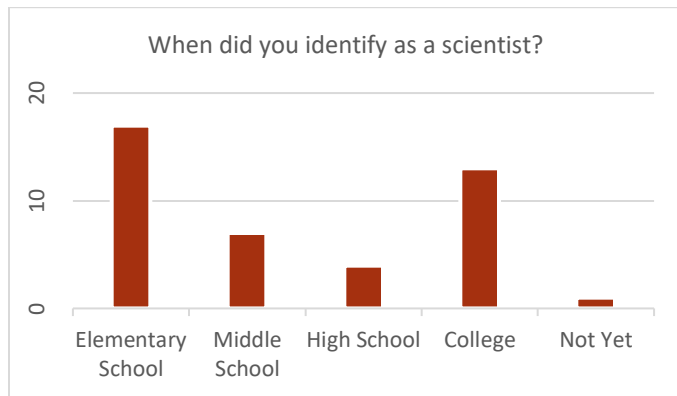
After the time for internal reflection, students are asked to choose one of their examples, draw an "identity timeline" on a whiteboard for one of the identity components, and annotate it with specific events related to that piece of their identity. They are also given the options to mark a timepoint with an X to indicate "something important happened here, but I don't want to share it."

Next, students put a post-it note on their timeline to mark when they first felt like a scientist. Then they reflect back and overlay a "STEM timeline" on their original identity component to think about connections between their personal identity that may have contributed to their STEM identity without necessarily being "the key moment they felt like a scientist."

Students do a gallery walk to see ideas from their classmates, and have a small or large group discussion about items from others' timelines that resonated or sparked new ideas for their own STEM+personal identity paths.

Identity as a scientist:

Over the course of 3 semesters (n=42), the majority of students reported identifying as a scientist during an elementary school activity or after being successful in a university class or research setting.



STEM + Identity Timelines:

Having students focus on more than one component of their identity is useful because as students are reflecting, one identity component often sparks ideas or thoughts related to the other. Many students inherently choose a component of their identity that links closely to their STEM experiences, perhaps without realizing it or by mentally linking this activity to the STEM identity work in the pre-class preparation assignment. For example: health and ability, geographic affiliation, language, and political affiliation are common choices. Anecdotally, many students comment that they could have chosen the topic of a classmate and done a timeline related to their own experience through that lens as well.

Note: These sample responses of student responses, but they have not been formally evaluated and do not include responses from multiple groups of students. In this case, n=42 students.

PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWS PROGRAM

FRAMEWORK COMPONENT: DEVELOP AWARENESS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

OVERVIEW

The Public Service Fellows Program is yearlong professional development program of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who apply to be part of a cohort of fellows and work together over a 3-semester series. The topic of identity is addressed early in the program, as it encourages deep personal reflection, and the sharing of experiences helps to build trust and camaraderie between members of the cohort. Much of the work for this activity is done individually by fellows; the bulk of the in-class component involves sharing reflective timelines, but visually and orally.

GOALS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

- Explore multiple factors that contribute to your identity over time
- Describe how misrepresenting someone's identity, either consciously or subconsciously, leads to power differentials in society
- Link identity and power to the idea of privilege, both broadly and in a personal context.
- Share your story and listen to those of others

PRE-CLASS REFLECTION

Engage with the personal and social identity wheel (see "Readings" below) as a guide to acknowledge the multiple facets of your identity. In the inner circle of the wheel, record identities that are the most important/strongest for you in each category. In the outer circle record identities that are less important/more subtle. (Recognize that "important, strong, and subtle" are subjective, and your interpretations of them are also part of your identity.)

- Consider your thoughts on the identity wheel (pre-class reflection, and **choose 3 categories that are both important to you AND have evolved over time**). You may choose the categories directly from the identity wheel handout (slices of the pie chart), or draw from readings for this week's preparation. In particular, potential ideas of more broad categories of identity: **Individual, Relational, Collective, and Material**.
- Within each of your 3 chosen categories (from the personal or social wheels), identify several key components that contributed to that portion of your identity and note at what time in your life they occurred. Remember that events can be short or long term, stable or dynamic, one-time events, re-occurring events, simultaneous, or overlapping events.

- The last step is to take your identity categories and events, and turn them into an **identity timeline or identity map**. Your categories and events can be drawn on your identity map in a variety of ways. You may create this identity timeline/map however you like. It does not have to look like a traditional "timeline" if that's not what resonates with you. *The only requirement is that the concept of time must be present somehow in your identity map.* Your 3 timelines/maps can be distinct, overlapping, or intertwined, etc.

You will be sharing these with your colleagues, and you may share as much or as little detail about each event as you would like. If there is something you feel really shaped your identity in the context you chose, but don't want to explain it further, it is fine to include it on your timeline, and say "Something happened here, but I don't want to tell you what" during our broader discussion in class.

READINGS

Camacho, M.M. *Power and Privilege: Community Service Learning, Tijuana, Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Summer 2004; pp. 31-42.

Chavez, C.I. and J.Y. Weisinger, *Beyond Diversity Training: A Social Infusion for Cultural Inclusion*, Human Resource Management, (47:2), Summer 2008, pp. 331-350.

Vignoles, V.L., Schwartz, S.J., and K. Luyckx. *Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity*, in S.J. Schwartz et al. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, Spring Science + Business Media, 2011.

Personal and social identity wheels, adapted from a resource developed at Arizona State University:



IN-CLASS

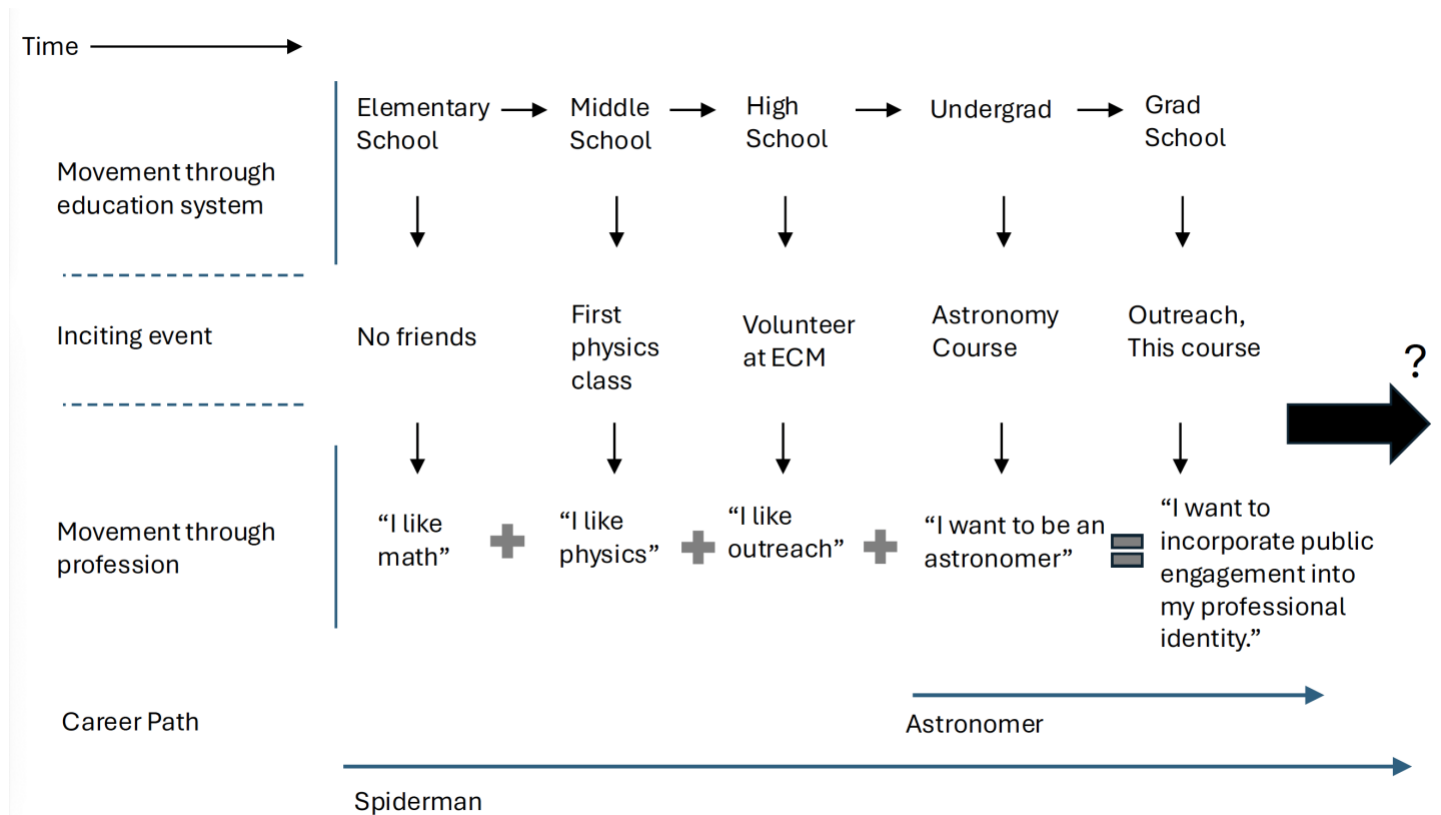
- Take time to draw your 3 timelines on a whiteboard or large post-it note to be shared with the class. Remember that these can be in any format and you can share as much as you like. You should have completed a draft of this as part of your pre-class work.
- Verbally share your timeline with the members of your cohort. After each share-out, we will make space for others to get close enough to view your timeline more carefully and combine their visual reflection with your verbal one. As a group, you may decide if you would like to answer any questions about someone's timeline, or if you prefer to simply go around the room and share.

DEBRIEF

Reflective Free write: How much of your identity can be seen?

SAMPLE TIMELINE #1 (USED WITH PERMISSION)

This graduate student created a linear timeline that focused on linking time within a specific point the education system with something specific that happened to them or that they participated in, and how those tie in with their desired profession and career:



SAMPLE TIMELINE #2 (USED WITH PERMISSION)

This graduate student created a central linear timeline that focused time through the education system from left to right as a reference. After high school, they began incorporating professional career interests within that timeline. The brackets across the top are labeled as hobbies that were of interest during the time that aligned with that point in the educational system. For example: "Dancer" spans pre-school until the break between middle and high school; "Chef" spans the timeframe from their undergraduate experience until present. The circled areas across the bottom represent personality traits that were either noticed on their own or pointed out to them by others, with the starting point in time organized from left to right. Traits that are crossed out are ones that they no longer identified with at some point in time.

